

# **Honing the Dagger: The Formation of a Standing Joint Special Operations Task Force Headquarters**

**A Monograph**

**by**

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# **SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES**

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## **Abstract**

**HONING THE DAGGER: THE FORMATION OF A STANDING JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS** by MAJ James E. Hayes III, U.S. Army, 41 pages.

Since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has taken the lead in fighting the Global War on Terror. In spite of this new charter, however, USSOCOM continues to conduct operations with antiquated command and control (C2) doctrine and structures. This failure to adapt has greatly hindered the ability of SOF to prosecute the war on terrorism with the necessary efficiency, flexibility and agility.

When a Joint Task Force (JTF) is formed, the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) is normally tasked to form a joint special operations task force, or JSOTF, to command and control all special operations forces (SOF) in the JTF. A Joint Force Commander forms this organization on an ad hoc basis, usually cobbled together from the TSOC staff, the regionally oriented Special Forces Group, Naval Special Warfare Task Unit, or some other entity. Consequently, JSOTF staff members face a steep “learning curve” upon the headquarters’ formation, since in all likelihood they will not have trained or worked together before. This ensuing lack of efficiency and cohesion, at least during the initial stages of the JSOTF’s formation, causes unnecessary friction and turbulence during the conduct of operations. A likely solution to SOF’s command and control dilemma is a standing JSOTF (SJSOTF) headquarters. By forming these headquarters on a permanent basis, U.S. SOF would possess a cohesive, well-trained C2 node free from the organizational and administrative problems associated with ad hoc structures.

This monograph explores an alternative way of providing a JSOTF headquarters to the Joint Force Commander. Beginning with a history of joint SOF doctrine, the monograph outlines the evolution of special operations command and control and the subsequent need for a standing operational-level headquarters. Having identified this void in capability, the monograph then presents a model for a SJSOTF headquarters possessing a full-time complement of qualified personnel and robust capabilities to conduct special operations across the spectrum of conflict. The monograph then analyzes the SJSOTF headquarters model against evaluation criteria established by USSOCOM.

In the midst of global conflict, SOF must transform in order to maintain its relevance. America’s special operators can no longer rely on hastily formed command and control structures while prosecuting this fight. Therefore, this monograph’s principal aims are to stimulate discussion in the special operations community and, consequently, serve as a potential catalyst for change.

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## Introduction

The tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the ensuing Global War on Terror (GWOT) have placed an increased emphasis on the capabilities of special operations forces (SOF). At one time relegated to supporting conventional operations, SOF's top-quality personnel, unique operational techniques and independence from friendly support have made it the logical choice for leading the counterattack against terrorism. The defeat of Al-Qaeda and their Taliban sponsors in Afghanistan by SOF, indigenous forces, and joint airpower provides a clear example of this new paradigm. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recognized SOF's renewed importance when he announced on January 7th 2003 that U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) would be the lead military agency in the war on terrorism:

“SOCOM will function as both a supported and a supporting command. The global nature of the war, the nature of the enemy and the need for fast, efficient operations in hunting down and rooting out terrorist networks have all contributed to the need for an expanded role for Special Operations forces. We are transforming that command to meet that need.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite this new charter and the dramatic successes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, USSOCOM continues to conduct operations with antiquated command and control (C2) doctrine. The crux of the problem lies with the joint special operations task force, or JSOTF. The JSOTF constitutes the operational C2 structure for deployed SOF; it is the focal point where the actions of disparate special operations units (Army Special Forces, Rangers, Navy sea-air-land (SEAL) units, Air Force special ops aviation, etc) are planned, synchronized, and executed.

When a Joint Task Force (JTF) is formed, the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) is normally tasked to establish a JSOTF to command and control all SOF in the JTF.<sup>2</sup> This organization is habitually formed on an ad hoc basis, cobbled together from the TSOC staff,

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker. “Special Warriors Have Growing Ranks And Growing Pains In Taking Key Antiterror Role.” *New York Times*, 2 August 2004, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1 Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998), II-2.

the regionally oriented Special Forces Group, Naval Special Warfare Task Unit, National Guard special operations augmentee program, or some other entity. Consequently, JSOTF staff members face a steep “learning curve” upon the headquarters’ formation, since in all likelihood they will not have trained or worked together before. This ensuing lack of efficiency and cohesion, at least during the initial stages of the JSOTF’s lifespan, causes unnecessary friction and turbulence during the conduct of operations. These are difficulties the SOF community can ill-afford, for conducting world wide counter terrorism (CT), direct action (DA), special reconnaissance (SR), unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID) and other mission sets against a ruthless and cunning enemy requires a truly streamlined C2 structure.<sup>3</sup>

As previously mentioned, current joint special operations doctrine calls for the JSOTF to be formed around the nucleus of the TSOC staff.<sup>4</sup> Prior to 9/11, this construct made sense; crises were normally confined to a specific region of the world, thereby making it necessary for the responding JSOTF to have a regional focus. Additionally, operations requiring the deployment of a JSOTF prior to 9/11 were normally of short duration, such as the 1996 non-combatant evacuation (NEO) in Liberia. Executed by a JSOTF drawn from Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR), the operation witnessed the evacuation of 2,115 people to a safe haven in Sierra Leone.<sup>5</sup> Once the evacuation was complete, the JSOTF transferred responsibilities to a conventional JTF and redeployed.

The current threat, however, renders this methodology ineffective. Trans-national terrorist and criminal organizations do not respect national borders, nor do their operations neatly conform to the boundaries of our geographic combatant commands (GCC’s). In fact, these groups seek to confound us by operating on the seams of the GCC’s, sowing confusion and perhaps even

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3.05 Joint Special Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998), II-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p III-1.

<sup>5</sup> Henry H. Shelton, “Coming of Age: Theater Special Operations Commands.” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Winter 1996, p 51.



inertia in our C2 architecture. Furthermore, the threat's organizational structure is of a highly complex, cellular nature, often entrenched in the chaotic infrastructure of failed states. The unique nature of the terrorist threat, therefore, calls for C2 structures that are flexible, durable and globally focused.

A likely solution to SOF's command and control dilemma is the standing JSOTF (SJSOTF) headquarters. By forming these headquarters on a permanent basis, SOF would possess a cohesive, well-trained C2 node free from the organizational and administrative problems associated with ad hoc structures. The standing JSOTF is not a novel concept; in fact, many in the SOF community have made the subject an integral part of monographs, position papers, and other professional writings. What is missing is a new approach to the subject of standing JSOTFs, one that reflects an organizational structure in tune with USSOCOM's global mission against terrorism.

This monograph explores an alternative way of establishing a SJSOTF headquarters. It first examines the evolution of joint SOF doctrine and why the current JSOTF construct is inadequate for prosecuting the GWOT. Having established an historical framework for the current state of joint SOF doctrine, the monograph then presents a model for the SJSOTF headquarters. In doing so, the monograph outlines command and control functions, staff organization and roles, and deployment packages. The monograph then analyzes this model against the SOF Attributes outlined in USSOCOM's 2003-2004 Posture Statement: Precision Strikes and Effects, Tailored and Integrated Operations, Ubiquitous Access, Regional Expertise, C4ISR Dominance, Agile and Unconventional Logistics, and Force Protection and Survivability.<sup>6</sup>

SOF's unique ethos and capabilities have made it an important instrument to implement the National Security Strategy of a nation with global commitments and implacable enemies. The operational warfighting piece of this structure, the JSOTF, has proven its worth in the regional

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<sup>6</sup> United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM Posture Statement 2003-2004*. (MacDill AFB, FL: Center for Policy, Training, and Readiness, 2003), 66.

crises of the latter part of the twentieth century. However, to defeat the threats of a new century, a new organization with a sense of permanence and a global, expeditionary outlook is required.

## **The Evolution of Joint SOF Doctrine and the Need for a SJSOTF Headquarters**

The drawdown following the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam greatly reduced the capabilities of U.S. special operations forces. Faced with tightening budget strings and a renewed emphasis on dealing with the Soviet conventional threat in Europe, the Department of Defense (DOD) did not waste time in decimating SOF force structure. Susan Marquis, a senior civilian DOD official and fellow at the Brookings Institution, provides an excellent description of this loss of capability in her book *Unconventional Warfare*. By the late 1970's, according to Marquis, the Army considered deactivating one of its three remaining Special Forces Groups, leaving less than 4,000 SF soldiers and support personnel on active duty. Similarly, the Navy considered shifting all remaining Naval Special Warfare units to the reserves, while the Air Force reduced its special operations capability to a few squadrons and a handful of aircraft.<sup>7</sup>

Even more damning than the post-Vietnam reduction in forces was the continued void in joint special operations structure. Despite the overall successful employment of special units in Vietnam, the United States still did not possess an organization that could mesh the capabilities of U.S. SOF into a cohesive entity, or even standardize training, equipment procurement, and doctrine. Additionally, without a high-ranking flag officer to serve as its advocate in Congress and the Pentagon, SOF units often fell victim to the whims of their respective services. Consequently, SOF units, never prized by conventional commanders because of their unorthodox activities, fell into misuse or neglect.

The SPARTAN (Special Proficiency at Rugged Training and Nation Building) program, a stopgap effort instituted by Special Forces officers in the 1970's, was one of the many desperate

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<sup>7</sup> Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*. (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 4.

steps taken to halt the seemingly mandated deterioration of SOF. Designed to demonstrate the unique talents of Special Forces, SPARTAN deployed Special Forces Operational Detachments-Alpha (SFODA), or “A-teams”, on humanitarian assistance missions to impoverished regions of the United States.<sup>8</sup> While the training actually contributed little to the combat readiness of Special Forces, the publicity generated by SPARTAN kept SOF in both the public’s and, more importantly, the conventional military’s eye.

The failure of Operation RICE BOWL in April of 1980 culminated this period of special operations forces decline. In its first large scale effort to combat the rise in international terrorism, the U.S. government put together a rescue team soon after supporters of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini took 53 members of the U.S. embassy staff in Teheran on November 4, 1979. Because the United States did not possess a standing joint special operations organization, units were pulled together from various services to form the rescue task force. An Army special operations unit formed the ground assault force, while the Navy provided the helicopters needed to infiltrate the assaulters and then exfiltrate the rescued hostages. Because the Navy could not produce pilots with enough experience in over-land flight operations, the Marine Corps provided the aircrews for the mission. Even though none of these elements had worked with each other before, the task force leadership curtailed full mission profile rehearsals due to security concerns, thereby worsening an already tenuous state of affairs.<sup>9</sup>

The hastily formed rescue task force did not fare well under the strain and friction of actual operations. Two helicopters were forced to abandon the mission enroute to the target due to mechanical failure, while a fierce dust storm caused the remainder of the aircraft to arrive fifty minutes late to the rendezvous point known as Desert One. Misfortune continued to plague the mission even on the ground; while transloading the assault force from the C-130’s, a third

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel M. Katz, *Today’s Green Berets: The U.S. Army’s Special Forces Groups (Airborne)*. (Hong Kong: Concord Publications, 1996), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 69.

helicopter became disabled due to a burned-out hydraulic pump. With only five operational helicopters remaining to conduct the mission, the task force did not have sufficient aircraft to move the hostages and assault force out of the target area in Teheran. After consulting with the National Command Authority (NCA) via satellite communications, the task force commander made the decision to abort.<sup>10</sup>

Aborting the operation did not end the task force's misfortunes, however. While hovering to clear the way for a C-130 powering up for take off, a helicopter became disoriented and collided with another aircraft. The ensuing explosions destroyed both aircraft and killed eight men. The survivors loaded in to the remaining C-130's and successfully exfiltrated out of Iran, leaving behind the wrecked aircraft and charred bodies of their comrades.<sup>11</sup>

Within weeks after the conclusion of Operation RICE BOWL, Congress directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to appoint a commission to "independently appraise the rescue attempt [and] recommend improvements in planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling any such operations in the future."<sup>12</sup> Officially titled the Special Operations Review Group, the panel became known as the Holloway Commission after its chairman, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James Holloway. Although the commission did not find fault with the men who planned and executed the mission, they identified various problem areas ranging from poorly defined command and control relationships to poor intelligence support and inadequate equipment. As a result of these findings, the Department of Defense created a standing joint counterterrorist task force and a Special Operations Advisory Panel.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Holloway Commission provided the impetus for the revitalizing of U.S. special operations capability. The disaster at Desert One had sparked an interest in SOF at the highest

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>13</sup> United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM History*. (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM History and Research Office, 1998), 3.

levels, particularly in Congress. Operation URGENT FURY, the mission to capture the island of Grenada from Cuban-backed revolutionaries in 1983, initiated further scrutiny of the problems associated with joint SOF capabilities. Army Major General Richard Scholtes, commander of SOF forces during the Grenada operation, offered the most scathing criticisms of the current structure during his testimony before Congress. In doing so, he explained how conventional force leaders misused SOF during the operation, resulting in high SOF casualties.<sup>14</sup> Responding to these endemic problems associated with SOF, Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and William Cohen (R-ME), both members of the Armed Services Senate Committee, began a process of reform.

The resulting Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 radically altered the structure and functions of U.S. SOF command and control. Most importantly, the amendment established the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC) and the USSOCOM. With a reporting chain that bypassed then normal military channels and a service-like organization, USSOCOM effectively assumed control of all U.S. based SOF. Additionally, USSOCOM controlled its own budget and acquisition of SOF-unique weapons and equipment through the institution of Major Force Program 11 (MFP 11).<sup>15</sup> After years of operating in the midst of uncertainty, SOF had finally acquired an established place in the U.S. national security establishment.

The essence of the Cohen-Nunn Amendment lay in joint interoperability. USSOCOM's charter called for SOF units that were trained and equipped to operate together. Additionally, SOF units were to be guided by a framework of joint doctrine that outlined tactics, techniques and procedures. Perhaps most importantly, however, SOCOM would establish command and control organizations to ensure the proper utilization of SOF throughout the spectrum of operations.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>15</sup> Shelton, "Coming of Age: Theater Special Operations Commands", 51.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 51.

At the operational level, the TSOC's would provide this C2 capability. In general, each TSOC would exercise operational control over assigned SOF, provide SOF-peculiar logistical support to assigned forces, and form the nucleus of a JSOTF able to act independently or as the SOF component of a JTF. Additionally, the SOC's would be responsible to the combatant commander for the integration of SOF into theater plans.<sup>17</sup> In conjunction with these tasks, the SOC commander would serve as both the principle SOF advisor to the combatant commander and commander of either the JSOTF, or in the case of multiple JSOTFs, the joint force special operations component command (JFSOCC).

Responsibility for this wide range of tasks and the growing pains associated with inexperienced staffs caused some friction in the TSOCs during their initial employment in the late 1980's. Other service component commanders, reverting back to the traditional distrust of special operators, felt reluctant to release forces or missions to the fledgling special operations headquarters. This friction was particularly evident with naval special warfare forces (SEAL platoons and special boat detachments) and their conventional counterparts. Since naval SOF habitually deployed aboard carrier battle or amphibious ready groups (ARG), geographic combatant commanders were loathe to upset this traditional arrangement by releasing operational control of the SEALs to their respective TSOCs. Civil affairs (CA) and psychological operations (PSYOPs) units also faced similar hurdles. They, like the SEALs, were designated SOF by stature, yet the GCC's retained them under the theater headquarters.<sup>18</sup>

The 1989 invasion of Panama, known as Operation JUST CAUSE, demonstrated both the growing capabilities and immature C2 structure of the TSOC's. A tremendously complex operation, JUST CAUSE involved simultaneous assaults by SOF and conventional forces of multiple targets throughout the area of operations. To accomplish the assigned mission, Joint Task Force South, the overall invasion force, established a separate JSOTF apart from Special

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 51.

Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH). In fact, the former, commanded by Major General Wayne Downing, gained operational control of the latter for the conduct of the operation. Re-designated Task Force (TF) BLACK, the SOCSOUTH operational element was comprised of mainly Army Special Forces personnel, namely SOCSOUTH headquarters staff and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group.<sup>19</sup>

TF BLACK, along with TF RED (Rangers) and TF WHITE (SEALs and Special Boat Units), accomplished a number of important H-Hour objectives under the aegis of JSOTF-South.<sup>20</sup> Specifically, TF BLACK elements effectively blocked the Panamanian Defense Forces' (PDF) Battalion 2000 (a well-equipped mechanized unit) from gaining access to the Pecora River Bridge, thereby preventing the PDF from interfering with the U.S. airdrops on the Omar Torrijos International Airport.<sup>21</sup> Other TF BLACK H-Hour missions included SR on PDF barracks and DA strikes to secure Panamanian radio and television stations.

Once major combat activities had ceased, TF BLACK continued to play a major role in the success of operations in Panama. By early January 1990, Operation JUST CAUSE transitioned to Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY, a mission focused on stability and security tasks. In order to accomplish its new range of mission sets, JTF South reinforced TF BLACK with an additional Special Forces battalion, a Naval Special Warfare Unit, and an Air Force Special Operations Detachment.<sup>22</sup> With these additional assets, TF BLACK became JTF BLACK and set about tackling the daunting task of stabilizing the local populace. JTF BLACK soldiers proved to be uniquely suited to this role; their in-country experience and language skills proved

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<sup>19</sup> Rod Lenahan, *Crippled Eagle: A Historical Perspective of U.S. Special Operations, 1976-1996* (Miami: Narwhal Press, 1998), 231.

<sup>20</sup> The *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms* defines H-Hour as "the hour at which a particular operation commences."

<sup>21</sup> Malcolm McConnell, *Just Cause: The Real Story of America's High-Tech Invasion of Panama*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 22.

<sup>22</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM History*, 32.

invaluable in leading U.S. conventional patrols, coordinating with Panamanian officials, gathering intelligence on PDF holdouts, and reestablishing Panamanian police forces.

JUST CAUSE and the ensuing PROMOTE LIBERTY demonstrated both the revival of SOF after the failed Iran rescue and the efficacy of joint SOF command and control dictated by the Cohen-Nunn Amendment. The operational element of the TSOC, TF BLACK, performed well during both combat operations and the post-hostilities phase. Perhaps the most significant aspect of TF BLACK's success was its successful transition from fighting to stability and support operations, due in large part to SOF's extensive regional expertise. Yet, in spite of these accomplishments at the tactical level, joint SOF command and control at the operational level during the Panama operation reflected uncertainty. The decision by the JTF-South commander to place operational control of all SOF under an outside theater JSOTF instead of SOCSOUTH indicated a continued lack of confidence in the TSOCs. JTF BLACK's outstanding performance during the post-hostilities phase certainly silenced many doubters of the Cohen-Nunn reforms; however, theater-wide C2 of joint SOF by the TSOCs continued to struggle out of its formative stages.

SOF activities during Operations DESERT SHIELD/ DESERT STORM exhibited a more mature system of command and control. Reflecting the experience of JUST CAUSE, USSOCOM sought to improve the efficacy of the TSOCs by formalizing their manpower requirements and increasing the number of personnel assigned to these organizations.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, SOF took on a more prominent role during operations in the Persian Gulf. Special Operations Command-Central (SOCCENT), the TSOC responsible for conducting special operations in the Persian Gulf region, deployed a JSOTF into theater less than a week after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the SOCCENT JSOTF, commanded by Colonel Jesse Johnson, provided C2 for SOF missions ranging from special reconnaissance behind Iraqi

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<sup>23</sup> Shelton, "Coming of Age: Theater Special Operations Commands", 52.



lines to seizure of oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. SOCCENT forces performed well on all accounts, prompting the theater commander General H. Norman Schwarzkopf to declare that SOF was “the glue that held the coalition together” and “the eyes and ears” of coalition forces.<sup>24</sup>

Both DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM seemed to validate the joint command and control system for SOF. Congress, eager to enhance the role of the TSOC’s after the Persian Gulf War, mandated general or flag rank (one star) officers as TSOC commanders in Europe and the Pacific, and later for the Central and Southern Commands.<sup>25</sup> Subsequent activities in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti provided further examples of the TSOCs’ ability to integrate joint SOF, yet only for regional contingencies. U.S. military forces after the collapse of the Soviet Union confined their operations to specific, discrete areas of the world. The absence of a global threat made this paradigm ideal; the United States could allocate forces to certain regional combatant commanders as needed and employ economy of force measures in others. Accordingly, GCC’s and their subordinate TSOCs focused almost exclusively on their areas of responsibility (AOR) in planning and exercises.

The element of time also played an important role in this post-Cold War model of regionally focused joint SOF operations. While SOCCENT did deploy elements quickly in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, it required more than a month to fully establish the JSOTF in theater. Coalition support and FID operations began almost immediately upon arrival, yet the first SR and DA elements of the JSOTF did not infiltrate into Iraqi-held territory until late January 1991.<sup>26</sup> This time lag between deployment and major combat operations proved to be more a function of political constraints and the GCC’s overall plan than any shortcomings in joint SOF C2, yet it must be considered a factor in SOCCENT’s success. With almost six months in theater prior to combat operations, SOCCENT found itself with ample time

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<sup>24</sup> Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 231.

<sup>25</sup> Shelton, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Lenahan, *Crippled Eagle*, 37.

to plan and prepare. The JSOTF headquarters, pulled from the various staff sections of SOCCENT, therefore had plenty of opportunity to run staff drills, train personnel, and conduct a myriad of other tasks in order to surmount the traditional friction between peacetime activities and wartime command and control.

Additionally, the employment of joint SOF C2 in crisis response operations during the post-Cold War era also benefited from the element of time. While requiring a faster response time than the build-up associated with the first Persian Gulf War, these operations typically did not last as long. TSOC commanders therefore had the capability to establish and deploy JSOTFs without significant impacts on other TSOC missions. Within 60 to 90 days of the initial deployment, a relief force in the form of a U.S. Marine Expeditionary Unit, United Nations peacekeeping force, or some other military entity could be expected to arrive and assume the duties of the JSOTF headquarters, thereby allowing its personnel to resume their “normal” peacetime functions at the TSOC. SOCEUR’s 1996 stability and support operations in Liberia are a prime example of this; within weeks of conducting the NEO operation to Sierra Leone, SOCEUR’s JSOTF had transferred responsibility for the operation to a conventional headquarters and re-deployed to Germany.<sup>27</sup>

The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 called into question this concept of joint SOF C2. Despite the tremendous progress in terms of synchronizing and integrating SOF operations since the Iran rescue mission, SOF’s command and control structures still lacked the optimal characteristics to meet a global terrorist threat. Defeating transnational terrorist organizations requires a tremendous degree of durability, responsiveness, and flexibility. Unfortunately, the theater special operations commands did not develop these attributes to their full potential prior to 9/11. Instead, the TSOCs developed a “jack of all trades” mentality; that is, pursuing various

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<sup>27</sup> Shelton, “Coming of Age: Theater Special Operations Commands”, 51.

levels of competence in “full spectrum operations”, from peacetime engagement to more traditional combat missions, rather than excellence in warfighting.

Research of actions in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), the United States’ effort to destroy the transnational terrorist threat after 9/11, provides numerous examples of these shortcomings in joint SOF C2 architecture. According to an in-depth analysis of OEF operations in Afghanistan conducted by Major Mark Davis, a student at the School of Advanced Air Power Studies, SOF C2 “was noticeably absent in the early phase of the campaign.”<sup>28</sup> In his study, Davis asserts that the late arrival of JSOTF K-Bar into theater, one of two JSOTFs assigned to conduct operations in Afghanistan, detracted from the effort to destroy Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in the Shahikot Valley in March of 2001. “Although he was designated the supported commander on 1 November 2001, [Rear] Admiral [Albert] Calland would not have a fully operational headquarters in theater until mid-November.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the DESERT STORM model of building ad hoc JSOTFs over an extended deployment time frame proved to be an unworkable concept during OEF. SOF planners, to their chagrin, discovered that operations in the GWOT required more responsive and cohesive C2 structures; forming a temporary “pick-up” team would no longer be adequate.

OEF activities in the Philippines displayed similar C2 shortfalls at the JSOTF level. When JTF-510 deployed shortly after 9/11 to the island of Mindanao in order to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in defeating the Abu Sayeef terrorist group, it followed standard procedure by stripping personnel from the staff sections of Special Operations Command-Pacific (SOCPAC). The JTF, essentially functioning as a JSOTF at this time, also required augmentees

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<sup>28</sup> Unsigned article, “Army Analyst Blames Afghan Battle Failings On Bad Command Set-up”, *Inside the Pentagon*, 29 July 2004, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

from the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group and other elements in order to be considered fully operational.<sup>30</sup>

Along with the normal friction associated with unfamiliar staffs working together for the first time, JTF-510 also contended with the inadequate post-Cold War procedures habitually practiced by TSOCs. Since the Pacific Command had designated JTF-510 as a contingency headquarters with the provision that it would be augmented or relieved 60 to 90 days after its initial deployment, SOCPAC followed the established standard operating procedures with little thought to their effect on the overall operation. Once an officer reached the end of a specified deployment window, SOCPAC simply replaced him. Thus, key staff positions, including the JSOTF's operations officer (J3) and intelligence officer (J2), switched frequently over the course of OEF-Philippines. As a result, little continuity or cohesion existed in the JSOTF headquarters; command and control functions often took longer to execute because newly-arrived personnel had not yet acclimated themselves to the operational environment. Unfortunately, little could be done to reverse this disturbing trend. Many of the officers in question were "dual-hatted"; that is, they held key staff positions at SOCPAC headquarters in Hawaii while serving in the Philippines on a temporary basis.<sup>31</sup>

U. S. SOF had traveled a long road since the uncertain days of Operation RICE BOWL. Applying lessons learned from operations and analyzing structures and systems with merciless objectivity, SOF rose from the ashes of Desert One and developed enhanced capabilities at the tactical level. However, ENDURING FREEDOM uncovered a clear shortfall in operational-level command and control. This "revelation" certainly should not catch SOF leaders unawares, since it is accounted for in joint SOF doctrine. Joint Publication 3-05.1 states:

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<sup>30</sup> Author's experience. The author, a Special Forces officer, served as an assistant operations officer in the Army special operations task force (ARSOTF) during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES (OEF-P) from May-August 2002. The 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), based at Fort Lewis, Washington, is regionally oriented to the Asia/ Pacific theater.

<sup>31</sup> Author's experience.

“The establishment of a JSOTF presents significant organizational, operational, and training challenges. These challenges affect the COMJSOTF (commander, joint special operations task force)’s ability to rapidly fuse a diverse group of key personnel, with varying degrees of understanding and experience in joint SO (special operations), into a functioning JSOTF....the establishment of the JSOTF may impact on the SOC’s other missions by the loss of key SOC personnel to the JSOTF.”<sup>32</sup>

In essence, current doctrine recognizes the inherent shortcomings in SOF command and control, yet can offer no solution to counter this friction other than relying on the skill and acumen of the JSOTF commander (COMJSOTF). Considering the innumerable challenges a COMJSOTF must face in the conduct of operations, forging an effective headquarters staff *after* a crisis occurs should not be included on that list. The very notion of using an ad hoc C2 structure violates one of the SOF Truths, the core beliefs that characterize the nature of U.S. SOF; that is, “competent special operations forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.”<sup>33</sup> Individual U.S. SOF operators and tactical units have certainly met the requirements of this dictum, yet, incongruously, the headquarters directing their actions have not.

According to a study conducted by the National Defense University, 81% of all JTF and JSOTF headquarters have had less than 30 days to prepare before forces deployed into theater.<sup>34</sup> In spite of this trend, SOF continues to function with the same antiquated command and control structures developed during the waning days of the Cold War. The increased operational responsibilities for SOF in the GWOT have further highlighted this void in capability, as well as the need for change. To be successful, SOF must take the next step in its evolution---the formation of a SJSOTF headquarters.

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<sup>32</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-2.

<sup>33</sup> United States Army Special Operations Command, *HQ USASOC SOF Primer*, 12 October 2004 [http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs\\_home.htm](http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs_home.htm). Last accessed on 12 October 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Glenn Hanson, “SJFHQ (Core Element): An Introduction” (a briefing presented to US Joint Forces Command, 12 October 2004), slide 9.

# **The SJSOTF Headquarters Model**

## **Command and Control of the SJSOTF Headquarters**

Before exploring the structure and functions of the SJSOTF headquarters, a discussion centering on command and control and basing options is warranted. An SJSOTF could operate from essentially two higher headquarters, USSOCOM or the TSOCs. At first glance, the TSOC appears to be the logical choice. Colonel Michael D. Adams, in his U.S. Army War College study concerning the formation of a standing JSOTF, writes, “Imbedding the standing JSOTF headquarters in the TSOC provides the most effective transition from the peacetime regional security and cooperation operations of a TSOC to its wartime role as the SOF component command.”<sup>35</sup> True, positioning the SJSOTF headquarters forward in theater with the TSOCs would yield some significant advantages, particularly in terms of regional orientation. In this scenario, the SJSOTF commander and staff would work with the TSOC staff together on a daily basis, becoming intimately involved and attuned to the operational environment of a particular region.

However, upon closer analysis, Colonel Adams’ argument for stationing the SJSOTF headquarters with the TSOC brings into question the true function of the deployable C2 node. If the SJSOTF headquarters must “transition”, as Adams attests, from peacetime engagement functions to wartime duties, then when does it train for combat? In all likelihood, the TSOC commander would immerse a SJSOTF headquarters in theater engagement tasks such as planning Joint and Combined Exercises for Training (JCET). The TSOCs’ historical manning shortfalls support this notion. According to a 1996 wartime requirements study conducted by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC), TSOC

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<sup>35</sup> Michael S. Adams, *Forming Standing Joint Special Operations Task Forces* (USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 8.

peacetime manning meets only 39% to 63% of their wartime requirement.<sup>36</sup> Given this continued dearth of personnel, a TSOC commander would be hard pressed to exclude the SJSOTF headquarters from the daily activities and taskings of the TSOC. In effect, the SJSOTF headquarters assigned to a TSOC would experience essentially the same friction its ad hoc brethren do upon crisis initiation since time needed for staff training during pre-crisis activities would most likely be squandered.

Additionally, personnel shortfalls throughout the SOF community would preclude the assignment of an SJSOTF to the TSOC's. As the ASD SO/LIC study indicates, TSOC's are historically undermanned with qualified personnel. Consequently, to establish an SJSOTF headquarters for each TSOC would put additional strain on an already overburdened SOF manning pool. 50% of the personnel currently serving on TSOC staffs have no prior SOF experience; the DoD personnel system simply cannot produce enough qualified SOF officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCO's) to fill these billets.<sup>37</sup> Instead, conventional service members from all services fill this gap, often requiring significant training time to become adept as staff officers in a SOF headquarters. The addition of an SJSOTF headquarters to each TSOC would further dilute the SOF background of the TSOC staff, for experienced special operators would most likely be pulled from their duties to fill key positions in the deployable command and control node.

Considering the limitations of TSOCs, stationing the SJSOTF headquarters at USSOCOM provides the most optimal solution. USSOCOM's mission statement supports this concept:

“USSOCOM plans, directs, and executes special operations in the conduct of the War on Terror in order to disrupt, defeat, and destroy terrorist networks that threaten the United States, its citizens and interests worldwide. USSOCOM organizes, trains, and equips Special Operations Forces provided to

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 12.

Geographic Combatant Commanders, American Ambassadors, and their country teams.”<sup>38</sup>

The emphasis on planning, directing, and executing operations rather than simply providing trained forces to overseas commanders illustrates USSOCOM’s new charter as a supported command.<sup>39</sup> USSOCOM’s charter is consistent with the nature of the terrorist threat, one that is global in nature and possesses significant operational reach. Because the threat can and will cross GCC boundaries to strike its targets, USSOCOM’s responding headquarters should therefore have a global, rather than regional, focus.

Perhaps most significantly, legal precedents favor assigning the SJSOTF headquarters to USSOCOM. Specifically, Title 10, section 167(d)(i) of the U.S. Code states, “Unless otherwise directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, a special operations activity or mission shall be conducted under the command of the commander of the unified combatant command in whose geographic area the activity or mission is to be conducted.” Section 167(d)(i) further provides, “The commander of the special operations command shall exercise command if directed to do so by the President or Secretary of Defense.”<sup>40</sup> Given Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld’s announcement of 7 January 2003, the way is clear for USSOCOM to assume its legal role as a supported command. Assigning the SJSOTF headquarters to USSOCOM would represent a tangible step towards that goal.

Assigning the SJSOTF headquarters to USSOCOM would not limit the ability of TSOC’s to conduct operations within their specific areas of responsibility; rather, the assignment gives

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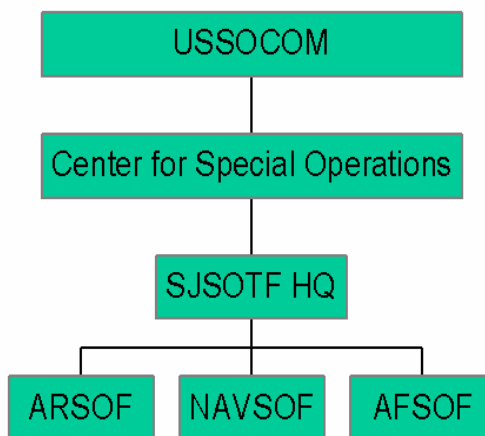
<sup>38</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003 <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.mil>> According to the *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms*, a supported commander is “the commander who receives assistance from another commander’s force or capabilities, and who is responsible for ensuring that the supporting commander understands the assistance required. The supporting commander is the commander who aids, protects, complements, or sustains another commander’s force, and who is responsible for providing the assistance required by the supported commander.”

<sup>40</sup> United States Congress, *Report to Congress on Changing Roles of the United States Special Operations Command* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 2004), 8.



policy makers and SOF commanders an expanded array of options and a more flexible system of command and control. In order fulfill its new charter as a supported command, USSOCOM reorganized its headquarters by establishing the Center for Special Operations. The new center is a joint and interagency directorate that has responsibility for all operational issues related to the war on terrorism, including planning, supporting, and executing designated special operations.<sup>41</sup> The SJSOTF headquarters would therefore become the operational arm of the Center for Special Operations, allowing for centralized planning and decentralized execution of special operations on a global scale in support of the war on terrorism. Specified Army SOF (ARSOF), Navy SOF (NAVSOF), Air Force SOF (AFSOF), and supporting conventional units would be placed under the operational control (OPCON) of the SJSOTF headquarters for the duration of the mission (see Figure 1).<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 1-USSOCOM as Supported Command**

Conversely, when the mission requires that USSOCOM resume its traditional role as supporting command and force provider, the SJSOTF headquarters could be placed OPCON to a

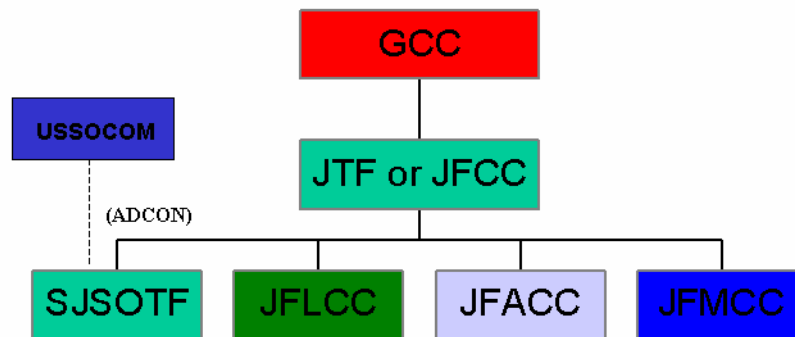
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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>42</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003  
<<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.mil>>The *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms* defines operational control, also known as OPCON, as “the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. “

GCC, JTF, or Joint Force Command (JFC) (see Figure 2). There, the SJSOTF headquarters could serve as a JSOTF under the theater JSOCC, or fulfill the role of a JSOCC alongside its Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC), Joint Force Air Component Command (JFACC),

**Figure 2-USSOCOM as Supporting Command**



and Joint Force Maritime Component Command (JFMCC) counterparts. USSOCOM would retain administrative control (ADCON) of the SJSOTF headquarters; additionally, the SJSOTF headquarters could employ reach-back connectivity to leverage the resources and capabilities of the Center for Special Operations while OPCON to a JFC.<sup>43</sup>

Only a standing headquarters with a global, rather than regional, focus offers this degree of flexibility. For example, one plausible scenario might include USSOCOM, as a supported command, employing the SJSOTF to conduct advanced force operations (AFO) or other GWOT activities in a region as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense.<sup>44</sup> While technically serving as the “supporting” command at this time, the GCC of the region would actually benefit

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. The *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms* defines administrative control, or ADCON, as “direction or exercise of authority over subordinate or other organizations in respect to administration and support, including organization of Service forces, control of resources and equipment, personnel management, unit logistics, individual and unit training, readiness, mobilization, demobilization, discipline, and other matters not included in the operational missions of the subordinate or other organizations.”

<sup>44</sup> As of this writing, no universally accepted doctrinal definition of advanced force operations (AFO) exists. CSM Mark Dunham, USA (ret) describes AFO in a 23 December 2002 interview with COL Mike Repass as “Secretary of Defense approved military operations such as clandestine operations, source operations, and deployment of enabling forces and capabilities to conduct target specific preparations prior to the conduct of actual operations.”

from the economy of force role provided by USSOCOM. Other than providing the required support for the SJSOTF, the GCC, along with its TSOC, would be free to conduct operations in other parts of its AOR.

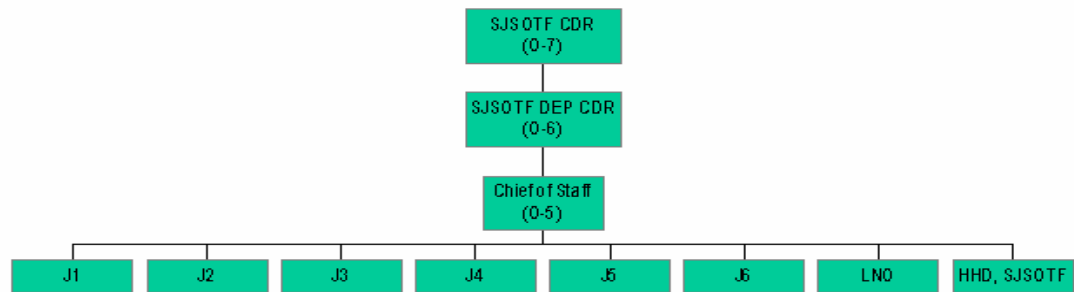
Once the situation had been developed sufficiently, USSOCOM could then shift to a supporting command, transferring OPCON of the SJSOTF to the GCC. The SJSOTF, having already conducted numerous operations in the AOR, would transition to the control of the GCC's JTF or JFC; in fact, the SOF element, with its longevity and enhanced situational awareness, would most likely play a significant role in the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) of other forces into theater. This is but one of the many command and control permutations offered by the SJSOTF headquarters acting in concert with USSOCOM's Title 10 responsibilities.

### **Organization and Functions of the SJSOTF Headquarters**

The SJSOTF headquarters will be, by definition, a joint organization. It will contain the appropriate mix of personnel in order to accomplish all doctrinal SOF missions in any environment---ground, air, and maritime. The SJSOTF headquarters will be a self-contained entity, requiring no outside augmentation for employment. It will not, as Colonel Adams suggests in his Army War College study, serve as the nucleus for a larger JSOTF staff.<sup>45</sup> This requirement will certainly strain SOF's already limited pool of manpower; however, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. With a full complement of qualified personnel, the SJSOTF headquarters staff will be able to develop the necessary cohesion and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP's) during pre-crisis activities. The SJSOTF will also operate more efficiently once deployed, having discarded the traditional burdens of training augmentees and integrating them into the organization.

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<sup>45</sup> Adams, "Forming Standing JSOTFs", 14.



**Figure 3-SJSOTF Headquarters Organization**

Joint Pub 3-05.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*, serves as the current doctrine for the employment of JSOTFs.<sup>46</sup> The SJSOTF will adhere to this doctrinal framework, making modifications as necessary to accommodate mission-related requirements of the GWOT. Figure 3 depicts the organizational structure of the SJSOTF, one that closely resembles that found in Joint Pub 3-05.1.<sup>47</sup>

Each staff section of the SJSOTF headquarters will share three main characteristics. First, as previously mentioned, each staff section will be fully manned at all times, thereby allowing for both effective training during pre-crisis activities and seamless employment during operations. Secondly, each staff section will be manned with experienced SOF and SOF-support officers and NCO's who are capable of planning and executing special operations across the full spectrum of conflict. Personnel with no operational SOF background should not be assigned to the SJSOTF headquarters.<sup>48</sup> Finally, each staff section of the SJSOTF headquarters should, with

<sup>46</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3.05-1*, i.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, II-4.

<sup>48</sup> Author's personal opinion. Approximately 50% of the personnel currently assigned to USSOCOM and the TSOCs have no SOF experience. While the vast majority of these officers are hardworking and capable, their lack of understanding with regards to the capabilities and limitations of SOF often hinders mission planning.

augmentation, be capable of fulfilling its role in a joint task force configuration should the need arise.<sup>49</sup>

The SJSOTF headquarters should be commanded by an 0-7 flag officer (brigadier general or rear admiral, lower half) with previous experience in command of a Special Forces Group, Naval Special Warfare Task Group, Ranger Regiment, or other equivalent SOF organization. Having an 0-7, rather than an 0-6, command the SJSOTF will give the organization additional clout in terms of rank structure, thereby allowing for greater SOF influence and input when serving under a JTF. An 0-7 SJSOTF commander (COMSJSOTF) will also place the organization on a more equal footing with the regional TSOC, since both the COMSJSOTF and TSOC commander will share the same rank. Dealing with his regional counterpart as a peer rather than as a subordinate will facilitate the COMSJSOTF's role as a supported commander for specific missions.

The increased rank structure of the SJSOTF also adds to the flexibility and agility of the organization. For example, if the need for the SJSOTF to expand into a JTF should arise, the Director of the Center for Special Operations, an 0-8 (major general or rear admiral, upper half), would take command of the organization and the COMSJSOTF would serve as his deputy. In this scenario, the SJSOTF Deputy Commander, an 0-6 (colonel or captain), would subsequently assume command of the JTF's special operations component command. Additionally, should the SJSOTF be broken down into two smaller JSOTFs, the SJSOTF Deputy Commander would take charge of one of these elements.

The SJSOTF J-1 will perform duties as prescribed by Joint Pub 3-05.1, to include oversight of joint personnel planning and operations, joint personnel services coordination and

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<sup>49</sup> Eric T. Olson, "SOF Transformer: Preparing the SOF of Today for the World of Tomorrow." (Interview by Jeffery McKaughan, *Special Operations Technology*, Volume 2, Issue 4, 2004). Admiral Olson mentions the requirement for a standing joint task force headquarters in USSOCOM in order to fulfill the command's charter as a supported command.

joint manpower management for the SJSOTF.<sup>50</sup> The SJSOTF J-1 will be an O-5 (lieutenant colonel or commander) with prior experience on a TSOC staff of other SOF-related headquarters.

The SJSOTF J-2 will support the COMSJSOTF by providing intelligence and counterintelligence support to the SJSOTF and attached units.<sup>51</sup> Headed by an O-5 joint intelligence officer, the J-2 section collects, collates, and analyzes all-source intelligence for all doctrinal SOF missions. The SJSOTF J-2 will maintain a full-time Joint Intelligence Support Element (JISE) responsible for developing target intelligence packages (TIP), all-source production, collection management and dissemination, and counterintelligence.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, a National Intelligence Support Team (NIST) will be attached to the SJSOTF JISE on a full-time basis to provide connectivity to national collection assets during peacetime and crisis planning.<sup>53</sup> The J-2 Special Security Officer will maintain a full-time Tactical Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility in conjunction with Center for Special Operations Intelligence directorate.

The SJSOTF J-3 is the operational nerve center of the organization. As Joint Pub 3-05.1 dictates, the J-3 “assists the commander in the discharge of assigned responsibility for the direction and control of operations, beginning with planning and follow-through until specific operations are completed.”<sup>54</sup> Specifically, the J-3 plans, synchronizes, and executes all aspects of special operations, to include ground, air, maritime, fire support, information operations (IO), space operations, PSYOPS, civil affairs (CA), and personnel recovery.

The J-3, an experienced SOF O-6, will have several mission-specific cells to assist him. A staff cell will represent each the functional areas of ground, air, and maritime operations.

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<sup>50</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-6.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., II-8.

<sup>52</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003 <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddictionary/index.mil>>. The JISE, according to the *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms* is “a subordinate joint force element whose focus is on intelligence support for joint operations, providing the joint force commander, joint staff, and components with the complete air, space, ground, and maritime adversary situation.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. The NIST, according to the *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms* is “a nationally sourced team composed of intelligence and communications experts from Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, or any combination of these agencies.”

<sup>54</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-10

Normally, a Special Forces or Ranger 0-4 will chair the ground cell, an Air Force special operator or Army special operations aviation 0-4 will head the air cell, and a SEAL or Special Boat 0-4 will supervise the maritime component. Separate IO, CA, PSYOPS cells will contribute to the functional cells as necessary. The deputy J-3, an 0-5, will be responsible for consolidating and synchronizing the efforts of these functional cells into a consolidated course of action. Additionally, because the SJSOTF will have a global focus, the J-3 section will need to maintain a mix of officers and NCO's with a wide range of regional expertise in order to facilitate operations.

Recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have underscored the need for a dedicated element to coordinate joint fire support for special operations forces.<sup>55</sup> To address this requirement, the J-3 section will field a Joint Fire Support Coordination Element (JFSCoord). Led by an O-4 with joint fire support experience, such as an Army or Marine field artillery officer or an Air Force, Navy or Marine air liaison officer (ALO), the JFSCoord will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and integrating fixed wing, field artillery, naval surface fire support and other joint fires for SJSOTF operations

The J-3 section will also contain a full-time Joint Operations Center (JOC) directed by an experienced 0-4. While deployed, the JOC will monitor and synchronize the current operations of the SJSOTF. During pre-crisis activities, the JOC will assume a secondary role of planning, resourcing, and synchronizing training for the SJSOTF staff.

The J-4 section of the SJSOTF staff is responsible for the formulation of logistic plans and with the coordination and supervision of supply, maintenance, transportation, field services, general engineering, contracting, host nation support, and other logistics activities.<sup>56</sup> An 0-5 with prior SOF logistics experience will supervise this cell. The J-4 section, like the J-3, will be broken

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<sup>55</sup> Eric Braganca, "The Evolution of Special Operations Joint Fires" *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 35, 2004, 41.

<sup>56</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-12.

down into functional cells, to include medical, transportation, and contracting. In addition, a Logistics Operations Center (LOC) will be established on a full-time basis to serve as the focal point for all supply and logistical support operations. A cross-section of regional and joint expertise will also be important for the J-4 section, since they will have to interface with host nation agencies, naval special warfare combat service support teams (NSW CSST), special operations theater support elements (SOTSE) of the various TSOC's.<sup>57</sup>

The J-5, or plans section, will be headed by an O-5 with prior experience as a planner on a joint SOF staff. The J-5 section, as stated in Joint Pub 3-05.1, is responsible for deliberate planning for the SJSOTF, coordinating with the J-3 and other sections, and represents the command on JTF planning cells and boards.<sup>58</sup> Like the J-3, the J-5 will be broken down into ground, maritime, and air cells to facilitate detailed planning. In addition, the J-5 will man and run the SJSOTF Joint Planning Group (JPG) that is responsible for directing, synchronizing, and coordinating all deliberate planning for the organization.

The SJSOTF J-6 will be responsible for communications, electronics, and automation support for the SJSOTF.<sup>59</sup> Led by an O-5 joint signal officer, the J-6 section includes functional cells for joint communications control, automation control, message center, and frequency management. In addition, the J-6 will maintain a robust liaison (LNO) cell to facilitate coordination with other signal providers such as a Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE), other government agencies, and host nation service providers.

The SJSOTF LNO cell will be responsible for staffing the various liaison positions to outside agencies required by the SJSOTF. An O-6 with a SOF aviation background will lead this cell; when deployed, he and the majority of the LNO cell personnel will form the SJSOTF's

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<sup>57</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05*, III-3. According to *Joint Pub 3-05*, the SOTSE is the staff coordinator for ARSOF support requirements in the theater support command. The NSW CSST, assigned to each NSW group, provides full spectrum logistic support for designated NSW forces.

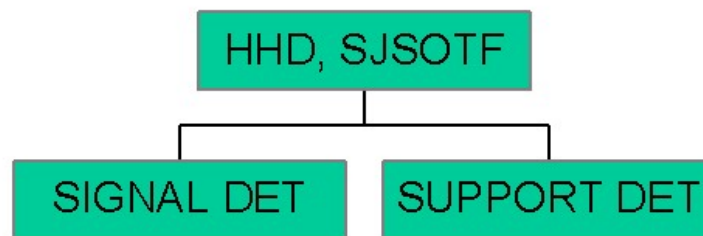
<sup>58</sup> JCS, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-15.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, II-16.



Special Operations Liaison Element (SOLE) to the JFACC.<sup>60</sup> The remainder of the LNO section will form similar, albeit less robust, SOF liaison cells with JTF headquarters and the JFMCC. The SJSOTF will not maintain a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) to coordinate with the JFLCC; when needed, the COMSJSOTF will task a subordinate element to perform this function.<sup>61</sup>

Unique to the SJSOTF will be the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD). Commanded by an O-4 (major or lieutenant commander), the HHD will perform the traditional headquarters commandant functions, such as life support, postal support, morale welfare and recreation (MWR) support, and SJSOTF base security.<sup>62</sup> Two subordinate functional detachments, the SJSOTF Signal Detachment and the SJSOTF Service Detachment, round out the HHD (see Figure 4). The inclusion of these two detachments will give the SJSOTF a more robust ability to deploy quickly, and then conduct sustained operations once in the operational area.



**Figure 4-SJSOTF HHD**

The SJSOTF Signal Detachment, much like the signal attachments assigned to Special Forces Battalions and Groups, would provide the SJSOTF headquarters with organic signal

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<sup>60</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05*, III-4. According to *Joint Pub 3-05*, the SOLE is comprised of SOF air planners and liaison officers from other SOF elements. The SOLE performs synchronization and integration of SOF activities with the JFACC to ensure effective targeting, airspace deconfliction, and fratricide prevention.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, III-6. According to *Joint Pub 3-05*, the SOCCE is a command and control element generally based on a U.S. Army Special Forces company headquarters (Special Forces Operational Detachment-B). The SOCCE integrates SOF and performs specified C2 and liaison (less PSYOP and CA) with land or maritime components of the JFC.

<sup>62</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, II-22.

support. Working in conjunction with SJSOTF J-6, the Signal Detachment would be responsible for the physical establishment and maintenance of the command, control, communications, and information (C4I) systems in the SJSOTF headquarters. This would preclude the need for non-organic communications support from already over-taxed SOF support units, such as the 112<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion.<sup>63</sup> Commanded by an 0-3 signal officer, the SJSOTF Signal Detachment will be equipped with the latest C4I systems, including the Joint Base Station (JBS), to permit continuous, timely, and secure connectivity with higher headquarters, subordinate units, and joint, host nation, and interagency enablers. Once the SJSOTF deploys, the Signal Detachment would establish the SJSOTF Signal Center (SIGCEN) providing message center services, internal telephone communications, and electronic maintenance in addition to its other C4I capabilities.<sup>64</sup> The Signal Detachment will also maintain organic multimedia and communications security (COMSEC) sections.

The SJSOTF Support Detachment's functions, like the Signal Detachment, also closely resemble those performed by its Special Forces counterparts. Commanded by an 0-3 logistics officer, the detachment would be responsible for unit-level supply, service and maintenance functions of the SJSOTF headquarters.<sup>65</sup> The detachment would also maintain and operate a small pool of tactical vehicles and material handling equipment (MHE) necessary for SJSOTF operations. During pre-crisis activities, the detachment will be responsible for configuring and maintaining SJSOTF equipment in appropriate deployment packages. When deployed, the Support Detachment would establish and operate the SJSOTF Support Center (SUPCEN).

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<sup>63</sup> United States Army Special Operations Command, *HQ USASOC SOF Primer*, 12 October 2004 [http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs\\_home.htm](http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs_home.htm). Last accessed on 12 October 2004. The 112th Signal Battalion is normally responsible for providing C4I support for JSOTFs and other deployed SOF headquarters.

<sup>64</sup> United States Army, *FM 3-05.20 Special Forces Operations* (Fort Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWCS, 26 Jun 2001), 3-24.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-23

## SJSOTF Headquarters Deployment Packages

Joint doctrine calls for JSOTFs to deploy and operate from austere environments where there is limited dedicated support structure.<sup>66</sup> Recent operations during Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM have witnessed JSOTFs deployed to a variety of locales, from primitive desert airstrips to U.S. Navy vessels. Accordingly, the SJSOTF headquarters must possess the same degree of flexibility, yet must not sacrifice responsiveness while achieving it. Force modularity is the key to achieving this goal. As defined by the *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms*, a force module is “a grouping of combat, combat support, and combat service support forces, with their accompanying supplies and the required nonunit supply and personnel necessary to sustain forces for a minimum of 30 days.”<sup>67</sup> The SJSOTF headquarters will tailor its deployment packages along these lines in order to respond to any possible contingency.

Deployment Package “A” (DP-A) will consist of the full SJSOTF headquarters and its organic support elements. DP-A will be employed when the SJSOTF is required to operate in a relatively mature theater in which support infrastructure and facilities are in place. For example, the SJSOTF, as part of a JTF, deploys to an intermediate staging base (ISB) located on a well-developed military airfield in a country bordering the joint operations area (JOA).<sup>68</sup>

Deployment Package “B” (DP-B) will consist of the full SJSOTF headquarters, its organic support elements, and any required support augmentation. DP-B will be employed when the SJSOTF is required to operate in an undeveloped theater with no dedicated theater support structure in place at the time of deployment. DP-B may also be employed when the SJSOTF is

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<sup>66</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Pub 3-05.1*, VII-12.

<sup>67</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003  
<<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.mil>>.

<sup>68</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003  
<<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.mil>>. According to the *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*, an ISB is “a temporary location used to stage forces prior to inserting forces into the host nation.” A JOA is “an area of land, sea, and airspace, defined by a geographic combatant commander or subordinate unified commander, in which a joint force commander conducts military operations to accomplish a specific mission.”

operating independent of a JFC or JTF, or when USSOCOM is functioning as a supported command for a particular mission. The augmentation force may be elements of 528<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Support Battalion, the theater SOTSE, the theater support command, or a combination of these elements.<sup>69</sup>

Deployment Package “C” (DP-C) supports the SJSOTF operating aboard U.S. Navy or coalition vessels. Establishing JSOTFs afloat is not a new concept. Most recently, SOF C2 elements operated successfully from carrier battle groups during both Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in 1994 and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in 2001. DP-C will consist of a scaled-down SJSOTF headquarters and support element, focusing primarily on J3, J2 and J5 sections since the embarked vessel will in all likelihood provide robust communications and logistical support. The SJSOTF Support Detachment will configure equipment loads to conform with available workspaces and berthing aboard commonly used platforms, such as aircraft carriers and command ships.

Deployment Package “D” (DP-D) will provide a task-organized augmentation package for tactical SOF units performing JSOTF duties, such as a Special Forces Group. By doctrine, a Special Forces Group can form a JSOTF with augmentation; however, recent experience has shown that this outside support usually comes in the form of a hodge-podge of TSOC staff officers and reservists with little or no SOF experience.<sup>70</sup> While DP-D is not the primary or the optimal configuration for SJSOTF operations, it nonetheless provides for a greater level of flexibility in SOF employment for the JFC. It also provides the gaining SOF unit with a well trained, cohesive staff element with the expertise to plan and execute joint SOF missions across the spectrum of conflict. The SJSOTF headquarters will be configured to provide three DP-D’s or one DP-D and a scaled-down DP-A to a Joint Force Commander.

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<sup>69</sup> United States Army Special Operations Command, *HQ USASOC SOF Primer*, 12 October 2004 [http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs\\_home.htm](http://www.soc.mil/hqs/hqs_home.htm). Last accessed on 12 October 2004. The 528<sup>th</sup> SOSB is responsible for providing logistical and maintenance support to deployed ARSOF units.

<sup>70</sup> Adams,” Forming Standing JSOTFs”, 12.

## An Analysis of the SJSOTF Headquarters

Any attempt at restructuring JSOTF doctrine must align with USSOCOM's transformation efforts in order to gain broad acceptance throughout the SOF community. Accordingly, this monograph employs the SOF Attributes outlined in USSOCOM's 2003-2004 *Posture Statement* as a benchmark to judge the efficacy of the SJSOTF headquarters model. The SOF Attributes, according to the *Posture Statement*, "describe what SOF will need to develop, preserve, or enhance in order to fulfill the SOF vision and mission of the future."<sup>71</sup> These attributes are: Precision Strikes and Effects, Tailored and Integrated Operations, Ubiquitous Access, Regional Expertise, Presence and Influence, C4ISR Dominance, Agile and Unconventional Logistics, and Force Protection and Survivability. Viewed individually, many of these attributes are characteristic of conventional forces. However, as the building blocks of a single entity, they outline the necessary qualities exhibited by SOF units and operators.

Precision Strike and Effects, as described by the *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, is the ability to "perform precision strikes and achieve scaleable lethal or non-lethal effects by rapidly characterizing and tracking targets and exploiting organic, national, and international systems as well as employing any other means or methods available."<sup>72</sup> While the responsibility for delivering precision effects will be, for the most part, the realm of the individual SOF operator and team, the SJSOTF headquarters can also play a significant role. For example, the imbedded NIST within the J-2 section will provide timely and continuous access to national-level intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms. This unique connectivity will give the SJSOTF headquarters and its subordinate units increased fidelity on potential targets and decreased "sensor to shooter" times. When combined with the SJSOTF's organic human intelligence (HUMINT) and special reconnaissance capabilities, the NIST offers an unparalleled holistic view of the battlefield.

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<sup>71</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, 66.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

Additionally, the staff cohesion found in a full-time organization such the SJSOTF headquarters will facilitate the precise tracking and engagement of enemy targets. Today's ad hoc JSOTF headquarters are usually compelled to devote a great deal of time to staff training and familiarization after their activation. In contrast, the SJSOTF headquarters will possess well-rehearsed and understood standard operating procedures (SOPs), having had ample opportunity to exercise them during the element's annual training. SJSOTF staff members will develop relationships based on trust and mutual understanding forged from the stress of numerous training evolutions and practice deployments. These strong interpersonal bonds will allow for a more timely and efficient execution of the SJSOTF targeting cycle, since no time will be spent on getting the staff "up to speed." These benefits can therefore be leveraged during pre-crisis activities. Since the SJSOTF headquarters has all of its staff sections fully manned and trained, it can devote its energies to analyzing the expected JOA, developing TIPs, and other critical tasks related to the application of precision effects.

The next attribute, Tailored and Integrated Operations, is described by the *USSOCOM*

*Posture Statement* as:

"SOF units and individuals must adapt quickly to changing mission requirements, objectives and operating environments. They can rapidly and effectively combined competencies and modify organizations to accomplish a variety of missions with autonomy. SOF transform and reshape organizational design and force structure to ensure effective collaboration in joint, interagency, and combined operational environments, to include work with indigenous forces, non-governmental and international organizations and local civilian entities."<sup>73</sup>

In short, any future SOF element must be extremely flexible and adaptable in order to contend with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. By design, the SJSOTF headquarters meets this requirement. The SJSOTF headquarters' unique deployment packages allow both the COMSJSOTF and the Joint Force Commander to tailor the SOF C2 structure to meet their operational requirements. For example, if the campaign plan calls for a single operational-level

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 66.

SOF headquarters, the COMSJSOTF can use DP-A, B, or C. If, however, the JFC requires multiple headquarters for more distributed operations, the SJSOTF headquarters can quickly break down into three separate C2 elements by employing DP-D.

The SJSOTF's unique capabilities and organization are also easily integrated into the Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ). An initiative of the Secretary of Defense, the SJFHQ is, like the SJSOTF, a full time joint command and control element with a daily focus on wartime readiness. At the time of this writing, a prototype SJFHQ exists at US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) for the purpose of helping designated combatant commands as they implement their own SJFHQ. Additionally, USJFCOM's prototype organization is responsible for validating several new operational concepts, such as Effects Based Operations (EBO) Operational Net Assessment (ONA).<sup>74</sup> As a fellow operational-level C2 node, the SJSOTF headquarters can assist in validating these novel concepts for SOF application, as well as engage in joint training with the SJFHQ. Should the situation dictate, the two headquarters could quickly shift focus to conduct collaborative Crisis Action Planning (CAP).

Ubiquitous Access is the next SOF Attribute. SOF, as the USSOCOM *Posture Statement* declares:

“...have access to and can potentially influence events or conduct overt or clandestine operations on demand. SOF conduct operations in all environments; land, air, sea, subsurface, space, and in areas denied to conventional forces because of political or threat conditions. Access includes an appropriate forward presence, as well as the ability to mobilize and project quickly from continental United States (CONUS) or outside continental United States (OCONUS) basing.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> United States Joint Forces Command. *Doctrinal Implications of Operational Net Assessment*. (Norfolk, VA: The Joint Warfighting Center, 24 February 2004), 4. EBO is defined by USJFCOM as “actions that change the state of a system to achieve directed policy aims using the integrated application of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power.” ONA, a key enabler of EBO, is defined as “the integration of people, processes, and tools that use multiple information sources and collaborative analysis to build shared knowledge of the adversary, the environment, and ourselves.”

<sup>75</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, 67.

Again, the SJSOTF headquarters, by employing its mission-tailored deployment packages, can deploy quickly and operate from a wide variety of locations. While the SJSOTF headquarters does not possess an organic forcible entry capability, it can nevertheless operate in the most austere environments once a lodgment is secured.<sup>76</sup> More importantly, the SJSOTF headquarters' ability to operate from a sea-based platform negates most of the threat's anti-access systems and provides the JFC a greater degree of flexibility in SOF employment.

Regional Expertise, Presence, and Influence are defined as the ability to "conduct and influence operations anywhere, with minimal restrictions, through an extensive personal understanding and a network of relationships throughout the region."<sup>77</sup> More than any other, the SJSOTF headquarters falls short in satisfying the requirements of this attribute. Because it is globally focused, the SJSOTF headquarters will lack the regional expertise and cultural understanding characteristic of the TSOC's and other SOF tactical units. This reduced capability could prove problematic during the conduct of several SOF missions, most notably UW and FID. Both these activities require an intimate knowledge of the language, history, customs, and institutions of the operational area, often gained through years of constant engagement, in-country training, and combined exercises.

The SJSOTF headquarters' lack of regional expertise could be remedied by attaching selected personnel from the TSOC's. These officers and NCO's, handpicked for their knowledge and experience with regards to the JOA, could serve as advisors to COMSJSOTF and his staff elements. Their support and advice would facilitate the ONA process and the fusion of intelligence with operations in the SJSOTF headquarters. "Seconding" TSOC personnel to the SJSOTF headquarters would offer merely a temporary fix, however. This augmentation would be

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<sup>76</sup> Department of Defense. *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms*. 12 December 2003 <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.mil>>. The *DoD Dictionary of Military Terms* defines forcible entry as the "seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition." The SJSOTF headquarters could conduct a forcible entry operation if it is task organized with appropriate forces, such as the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment.

<sup>77</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, 67.



available to the SJSOTF headquarters solely for the conduct of actual operations, since the historically undermanned TSOC's would, in all likelihood, maintain control of their personnel during peacetime activities. Thus, the SJSOTF will not have an organic regional capability with significant depth while planning and training at home station. True, reach-back technologies and participation in Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) exercises such as Cobra Gold and Bright Star would permit a limited degree of regional understanding. Yet without continuous engagement, the SJSOTF headquarters will face a tremendous challenge in keeping its "finger on the pulse" of the world's potential trouble spots.

Recent history has shown that regional orientation is not always a prerequisite for success in special operations, however. During Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, for example, a JSOTF made up of SOCEUR elements and the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group conducted successful humanitarian relief activities in Northern Iraq to assist the Iraqi Kurds fleeing from Saddam Hussein's forces. Because of their European orientation, none of the JSOTF's operators had previously studied Iraq, or had gained fluency in the region's languages. Undeterred, the Special Forces soldiers employed their ingenuity, discipline, and training in unconventional warfare to overcome these cultural barriers.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, the SJSOTF headquarters' inherent qualities of unit cohesion and depth of operational experience will facilitate its adaptation to any regional contingency. Consisting solely of experienced SOF operators and SOF support personnel, the SJSOTF headquarters staff will also have the ability to improvise in the face of unfamiliar conditions.

As the *USSOCOM Posture Statement* attests, continued dominance in the areas of Command and Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) will be vital to the success of any future SOF mission. The document states", Exploiting superiority in the area allows the SOF Warrior to access, develop, and operate

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<sup>78</sup> Gordon W Rudd, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2004), 64.

effectively in any situation, taking decisive action that shapes the desired results without effective opposition.”<sup>79</sup>

USSOCOM identifies collection, decision support, and communications and data exchange as areas of emphasis for successful C4ISR Dominance. The SJSOTF headquarters provides an enhanced information collection capability with its organic NIST. While many current JSOTFs are allocated NISTs once they deploy to an operational area, they do not possess the same interoperability and cohesion found in an SJSOTF headquarters with a full-time national intelligence reach-back capability. NIST personnel of the SJSOTF headquarters would have developed firm working relationships with the COMSJSOTF and his uniformed staff due to continuous, daily interaction. The COMSJSOTF could employ these strong ties during pre-crisis activities to build a robust database on the operational area, which could then be expanded and refined once the SJSOTF headquarters deployed.

Decision support would also be enhanced in the SJSOTF headquarters. Once again, the intangibles of unit cohesion and continuous personal interaction would play a major role in assisting the commander in making decisions. Key staff members, in particular the J3, J2, and J5, would know the COMSJSOTF’s “battle rhythm”, or daily cycle of significant events, intimately. They would understand, after numerous training exercises and practice deployments, how the COMSJSOTF requires information to be presented in order to facilitate efficient decision-making. The importance of this factor cannot be overstated. As a matter of course, the SJSOTF headquarters will field the latest automated command and control equipment, yet it is the human element that will provide the marked advantage. During SJSOTF operations, information would be collected from all sources, analyzed and processed into actionable intelligence, and then tailored to fit the decision-making needs of the COMSJSOTF and his subordinate commanders. These vital functions are best accomplished by a staff of trusted, well-trained professionals

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<sup>79</sup> USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Posture Statement*, 67.

serving together in a full-time headquarters, rather than cobbled together just prior to the conduct of an operation.

Communications and data exchange would also be enhanced with the SJSOTF headquarters model. The addition of an organic Signal Detachment along with a more robust J-6 section allows the SJSOTF headquarters to conduct seamless, integrated, and unhindered information exchange. The SJSOTF's organic C4ISR providers would establish information networks early and continuously integrate them with joint, interagency, and host nation systems as the theater of operations matures.

The *USSOCOM Posture Statement* defines Agile and Unconventional Logistics as “logistical support necessary to conduct operations or employ conventional and unconventional means to acquire their own logistical support.”<sup>80</sup> The addition of the Service Detachment to the SJSOTF headquarters would provide a higher degree of self-sufficiency, both at home station and while in the JOA. The SJSOTF headquarters will not have to rely upon outside elements from TSOC's or SOF tactical units to provide resources for the element's deployment and sustainment.

Unconventional logistics, however, poses a larger challenge. The implications of *unconventional* logistics point to independence from conventional support, and therefore an increased reliance on host-nation and interagency providers. Here again, the SJSOTF headquarters' global, rather than regional, focus may impede its efforts. Without an in-depth knowledge of the target region, SJSOTF logisticians would find it difficult to leverage indigenous sources of supply. As with their counterparts in operations and intelligence, the SJSOTF J-4 section could be augmented with area experts from the TSOC, SOTSE, or regionally oriented tactical SOF units. Again, this would offer only a temporary solution, for these key personnel would most likely not be made available to SJSOTF headquarters until just prior to its deployment.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 68.

In describing Force Protection and Survivability, the *USSOCOM Posture Statement* reads:

“SOF personnel enhance physical survivability through education, training, and experience. SOF elements employ stealth, speed, and counter-measures to ensure survivability. SOF personnel employ signature management measures and technology, equipment (including weapons), electronic and C2 systems and networks that possess features that ensure survivability regardless of the operating environment and conditions.”<sup>81</sup>

While stealth and speed may be characteristics more commonly attributed to SOF tactical units, the SJSOTF headquarters would certainly use the education, training, and experience of its personnel to ensure force protection and survivability. Accordingly, the SJSOTF headquarters staff will be made up of mostly senior officers and NCO’s, with the vast majority having multiple assignments as operators in SOF tactical units. The staff’s degree of personal lethality and operational “street smarts” would therefore be very high.

In addition to the high degree of survivability at the individual level among the SJSOTF staff, the extensive pre-deployment training and rehearsals conducted by the organization will also play a key role in providing force protection and survivability. As a result of this training, the SJSOTF headquarters would have established drills or “play books” to respond to various contingencies, such as vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attacks, civil unrest, and downed aircraft. These procedures would be well understood by every member of the SJSOTF staff and constantly updated to remain abreast of the current threat. An ad hoc JSOTF, with its personnel focused on simply getting to know *each other*, much less complicated staff procedures, would not have this capability.

## Conclusion

The SJSOTF headquarters model is, for the most part, aligned with the SOF Attributes outlined in the *USSOCOM Posture Statement*. Its shortcomings in regional orientation are

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 68.

significant, yet can be temporarily ameliorated with some stopgap measures. While the lack of regional expertise and qualified personnel certainly pose challenges to the future of the SJSOTF concept, its global orientation does not. Recent events have shown that our most implacable enemies have a global, rather than a regional focus; they will strike wherever and wherever in order to achieve their goals. It is therefore only fitting for USSOCOM, the U.S. military's lead agency in fighting the GWOT, to also think globally and employ command and control structures that can operate in any conditions.

Inherent to this concept of global response is the ability to deploy quickly and operate efficiently once in the operational area. Our current model of JSOTF organization and structure clearly does not possess these qualities. All too often, U.S. SOF has thrown together operational-level headquarters at the eleventh hour, mixing and matching disparate, unfamiliar elements to form a semi-coherent whole. Given these sub-optimal conditions, the success of these haphazardly assembled C2 nodes is a tribute to the determination, intelligence, flexibility, adaptability and endurance of the officers and NCO's manning their respective staffs.

U.S. SOF must do better. Its history has been one of exemplary innovation and evolution; now is the time to take the next step. A standing operational-level headquarters will fill the void in SOF C2 capability, providing a durable link between the tactical excellence of the SOF operator and the strategic goals of the Nation he serves. The unprecedented scourge of transnational terrorism and the threat it poses to U.S. national interests have provided the necessary momentum for change. The SOF community must take advantage of these conditions and quickly transform in order to remain the force of choice against terror.

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